

HANDsome Horse

Grade Level: 3—4

Objectives: After completing this activity, students will be more familiar with the unit of measurement called “hands” that is used to determine a horse’s height. Students will have also practiced reading rulers and making measurement conversions.

Common Core: Mathematics: CCSS.Math.Content.3.OA.A.3; 3.G.A.2; 4.MD.A.1

Background:

Horses are measured in units called “hands.” One hand represents 4 inches. The origin of measuring a horse this way is very old, but easy to understand. In days long ago people did not have the common measuring devices like tape measures. To measure a horse, they used what was available. At various times in history and in different locales, a “hand” was defined as the width of a person's hand using the fingers only, the width of a person's hand using the fingers and the thumb, the height of a clenched fist, and possibly many others. Somewhere along the way, the measuring unit of a hand was standardized to mean four inches. Though the origins are ancient, a hand is still the unit of measurement for horses that modern horse owners use today. This activity will allow students to convert horse heights into feet and inches and practice reading a ruler.

Directions:

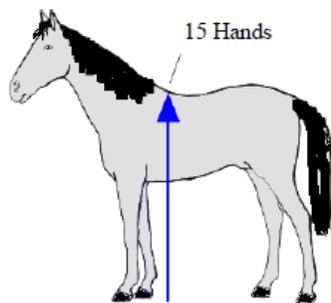
Carefully look at each horse and read the measurement from its withers (shoulder blades) to the ground. Each measurement will ask you to either determine how many “hands” tall the horse is or to convert hands into feet and inches.

Important things to know:

A “hand” is equal to 4 inches.
 There are 12 inches in a foot.

Example:

This horse is 15.9 hands tall. Convert this measurement into feet & inches.

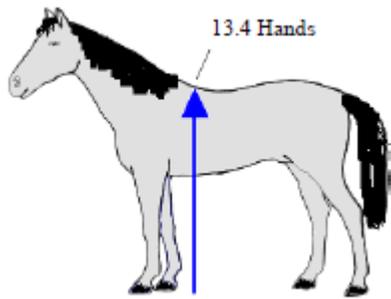


Answer: 5 feet 3.6 inches tall
 Solution: $15.9 \text{ hands} \times 4 \text{ inches} = 63.6 \text{ inches}$
 $63.6 \text{ inches} \div 12 \text{ inches} = 5.3 \text{ feet tall at the withers}$
 $5 \text{ ft} \& (0.3 \text{ ft} \times 12 \text{ inches}) = 3.6 \text{ inches}$

Complete the worksheet on page 12. Round inches to 1 decimal place.



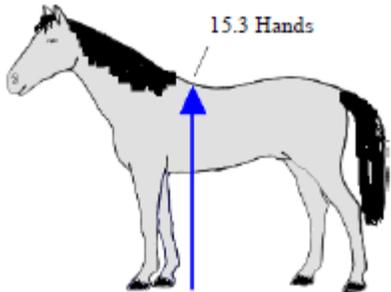
HANDsome Horse



1. This horse is 13.4 hands tall. Convert this measurement into feet and inches.

Show your work here:

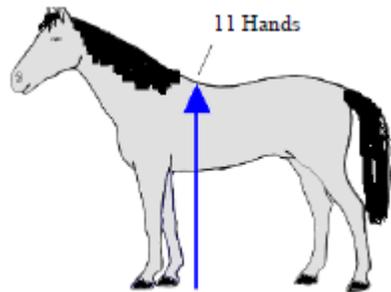
Answer:



2. This horse is 15.3 hands tall. Convert this measurement into feet and inches.

Show your work here:

Answer:



3. This horse is 11 hands tall. Convert this measurement into feet and inches.

Show your work here:

Answer:

4. If a horse is 6 feet 4 inches from the ground to the withers, how many hands tall is the horse? _____
(Hint just reverse the math equation but don't forget to put it into inches before you divide.)
5. If a horse is 4 feet 4 inches from the ground to the withers, how many hands tall is the horse? _____
6. If a horse is 5 feet 8 inches from the ground to the withers, how many hands tall is the horse? _____

Lesson Extender:

Create a wall display that marks the standard heights for different breeds of horses and ponies. As a class, figure out what each measurement is in feet and inches and then mark them with a cut out of a horse. After the horses' heights are marked, students could make their own sign and put it on the wall. Students will be able to compare their height with the horses' height. You could even measure students at the beginning of the year and then at the end to see how much they have grown!

**Taken from IL AITC Lesson Booklet:
Claws, Paws, Hooves, Wings & Things...*

